

"St. Paul's is certain death. My sentences are frozen as they come out of my mouth and are thawed in the course of summer, making strange noises and unexpected assertions in various parts of the church." Sydney Smith.

Lady Fanshawe, c. 1783, of Gloucester, a Patron and mother of seven, having lain in the family vault for two days, on the third was revived by two terror-stricken resurrection-men employed by a teaching-hospital. She continued alive for several more happy years.

"He deserves to be preached to death by wild curates."

"What is real piety? What is true attachment to the Church? How are fine feelings best evinced? The answer is plain—by sending strawberries to a clergyman."

Sydney Smith.



the Seducer and False Prophet.

Alexander Cruden, M.A., a Calvinist dissenter, d. 1770, between spells chained to an asylum bedstead, compiled references, chapter & verse, to every noun, verb, adjective and adverb in the Holy Bible. This great work, Cruden's Concordance to the Scriptures, inherited from his father, stands by this publisher's bedside, a constant inspiration to the compilation of similarly valuable Works of Reference.

# Welbourn's Dictionary of Prelates, Parsons, VERGERS, WARDENS, Sidesmen & Preachers, SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS

Hermits, Ecclesiastical  
Flower-arrangers

  
Fifth Monarchy Men  
and False Prophets.



*Welbourn's*  
*Dictionary*    
*of Prelates, Parsons,*  
**VERGERS, WARDENS,**  
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**TEACHERS**



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*This dictionary is dedicated to*  
**King John** who interrupted matins in Lincoln Cathedral conducted by Bishop (later Saint) Hugh (q.v.), remarking sardonically that sermons on bad kings bored him.

*Also to*

**George Lumb**, c. 1754, the Hayfield (Derbyshire) sexton, who, unable to satisfy applications for tenancies in his overfilled churchyard, prayed for guidance. That same day numerous persons of good standing witnessed a cloud of bodies (many recognising departed aunts and uncles) rise into the air and float off in the direction of Chesterfield whilst other onlookers remarked on a particularly deliciously appetising smell.

*And, finally, to*

**Thomas Harrison**, c. 1660, a Staffordshire butcher's boy and Anabaptist Fifth Monarchy man who became a Civil War major-general and one of Charles I's judges, yet scorned to flee at the Restoration. Dragged on a hurdle to Tyburn and hearing some scoff, 'Where is your Good Old Cause now?', this brave fellow (hand on breast) replied, 'It is here. And I shall seal it with my blood.'

## CHAPTER XXII.

A *GOOD* name is rather to be chosen than great riches, *and* loving favour rather than silver and gold.

**George Abbott**, Archbishop of Canterbury, d. 1633, a Guildford draper's son, whilst hunting shot to his death Lord Zouche's gamekeeper. That fledgling prig, Thos. Laud, having refused consecration by a 'homicidal prelate', later was beheaded (but for another reason).

**Aldhem**, a Dorset saint, c. 720, preached so long a sermon in Wimborne churchyard that the staff on which he leant took root and established itself as a minor Dark Ages tourist attraction.

**Ann Askew**, a Lincolnshire girl, d. 1546 by rack and bonfire for debating official sacramental dogma and for daring to be a vocally intelligent woman.

**Audrey, Abbess of Ely**, d. 674, though twice married stayed a virgin. To mortify the flesh she took three baths a year.

**Augustine**, a Benedictine missionary, c. 598, having won golden opinion by his conversion of the notably savage people of Kent, was called to Rome for an opinion of doctrinal questions, much exercising Papal experts. His answers to (a) 'May a layman who, the night before, had an impure dream, receive communion?' and (b) 'Can a similarly afflicted priest administer communion?' were (a) 'No!', (b) 'Not unless he can't find a stand-in'.

**Thos. Badby**, an Evesham tailor, d. 1413, offered pardon by the Bishop of Worcester and a small pension from the King, nevertheless would not agree that wine and wafer became Christ's blood and body in his mouth and so was burnt at Smithfield.

**George Bailey**, a Stapleton, Westmorland, verger, c. 1776, whilst having a last look around, was preserved from being dragged by boggles down a hole under the chancel by providentially having picked up a page torn from the Bible in his pocket. He later became a much sought-after anti-litter lecturer.

**Mary Baker**, c. 1817, a Smallridge, Devon, church-cleaner reduced to beggary by low wages, assumed the title of Princess Caraboo and was accommodated in Almondsbury Vicarage, NW13. There, her veiled face and voluptuous form so excited the curate and choirmen that she had to spend quite long periods up a fig tree in the Vicar's garden. The Law, (urged on by the Mother's Union), thinking her talents better suited to credulous Americans, transported her. The vessel, putting in at St Helena, she swam ashore and sought protection from Napoleon Bonaparte who thereupon began divorce proceedings from The Emperor of Austria's daughter. This enterprising young woman was last seen selling leeches in Putney High St.

**John Ball**, (d. 1381 by hanging, disembowelling and quartering), a hedge-priest without a parish, first heard of in York, was hounded by civil and ecclesiastical authority as he roamed the land doggedly preaching that Christ's dominant message had been economic and social equality. The better to bring to pass The Great Society, he may have established a chain of freedom-fighter cells. He coined the best-remembered non-Biblical sermon text, 'Whan Adam delf and Eve span, Who was thanne the gentilman?'

**Praise-God Barbon**, (Commonly 'Barebones' in non-academic publications), d. 1679, a republican leather-merchant and Baptist preacher.

**John Bastwick**, a Writtle, Essex, physician, publisher of a pamphlet categorising bishops as Enemies of God and Tails of the Beasts, was punished with a fine of £50,000 (our money) and ear-cropping. He later fought with more than usual ferocity in the Great Civil War.

**Mrs Euphemia Beswick**, c. 1803, a Manchester deacon's rich widow, notable for her staring eyes, left an annuity to her Baptist minister conditional upon his visiting an attic each New Year's Eve and feeling the pulse of her body enclosed in a long-case clock whose face she had replaced. The bequest lapsed with his death and still within the clock, she was removed to holy ground.

**The Revd. Lord Frederick Beauclerk, D.D.** Vicar of St Albans, c. 1820, great-grandson of King Charles II and Nell Gwynne and known in

Soho as Fred Diamond-Eye. This choleric man, a fanatical cricketer, took his stand at the wicket wearing a scarlet sash and white beaver, demonstrating a contempt for fast bowlers by suspending a valuable gold watch from his middle stump. He is said to have been an unutterably dull preacher.

**John Biddle**, a Gloucestershire tailor's son and father of Unitarianism, d. 1666, warned that denial of the doctrine of the trinity was punishable by death, straightaway penned a denunciatory tract. He died in jail.

**The Revd. Henry Blaine**, Minister at Tring, c. 1787, back from a Ramsgate holiday where he witnessed women emerging from the newfangled bathing machines, at his own expense published a pamphlet entitled *The Perils of the Soul*.

**Martha Blewitt**, landlady of The Swan and keyholder of Bidbrook Church, Essex, died in 1681 having married and survived eight husbands.

**Aaron Blore**, the Tysull, Staffs, verger, c. 1828, tickled awake feminine sermon-dozers with a fox's tail hung from a fishing-rod but rattled the heads of men and youths with a small mallet attached to a window-pole.

**Nicholas Breakspear**, a poor man's son of King's Langley, Herts, d. 1159, (whilst swallowing a fly), became the only English Pope. This publisher's mildly anarchic headmaster at Castleford Secondary School, wrote the only known play about him. This received a single performance before a small audience in the town's music-hall.

**Joshua Brooke**, Vicar of Manchester, c. 1850, a time-and-motion pioneer, customarily lined up a dozen or more wedding-couples at a time. His system deteriorating in old age, he married a wrong couple. But these, each taking an instant fancy to the other, rejected offers of Nullification by Special Decree, pleas from their intendeds, threats from fathers and brothers-in-law and fled to Blackpool.

**The Revd. John Brown**, minister to several parishes along the Border, reluctantly took in a strayed bull-terrier who had cured a bothersome female religio-hysteric with a single nip. This hideous beast, Toby, thenceforward punctiliously attended his saviour's services until,

consequent upon an affecting sermon on Heresies and Schisms of the Early Coptic Church, he slunk off and hung himself with his kennel chain.

**The Revd. Mr Busby**, c. 1666 of Addington, Bucks, when headmaster of Westminster School, fearing that his pupils might think him less than a king, refused to doff his hat to Charles II.

**John Bunyan**, d. 1680, an Elstow (Beds) tinker's son and Civil War veteran, condemned to 12 years in Bedford Jail for preaching, improved the time by writing *A Pilgrim's Progress*, which, read by this publisher at the age of five years, turned him from a frivolous life of idleness to one of earnestly feverish activity.

**Mrs Bell**, c. 1799, a keen Appleby flower-arranger, escorting her midshipman son, John, by coach to Portsmouth, found there that the fleet had sailed. Learning that his ship was becalmed off the Isle of Wight, this resourceful woman hired a skiff, rowed him out and saw him aboard. But a breeze springing up, the frigate made sail so, with true Westmorland grit, she went to the Wars with her boy.

**Cedwalla, King of Wessex**, c. 600, himself newly converted, in an access of evangelical fervour, rounded up the entire happily savage population of the Isle of Wight and, employing a platoon of heavily armed curates, baptised the lot in a single day.

**The Revd. Edmund Coleridge**, of Wandsworth, c. 1893, readying himself to propose the Royal Toast, pushed his shirt deep within his trousers but, trying to rise, found that he was held down by the dress of the Lady Mayoress of that Borough.

**Celestina Collins, of Coventry**, c. 1847, a great heiress and Sunday-school teacher, refused numerous marriage proposals, preferring to share her bed with a cock and fifteen hens.

**Annie Collinson**, d. 1804, a King's Stanley (Glos.) belfry-master's barmaid sister, sent down the cellar to replenish a bellringers' sociable, perished from suffocation at a bunghole.

**Richard Corbet**, Bishop of Norwich, c. 1598, his benedictional hands slipping off a bald-head, called irritably to his chaplain for a sprinkling of dust and, still ruffled, addressed an unusually hairy ordinand as "You-behind-the-beard!"

**The Revd. Francis Cornford**, Vicar of Cam, c. 1863, batting on Stinchcombe Ridge made a hit yielding 18 runs. 'Lost Ball' could not be called because at no time was it out of sight. Sadly, this good pastor is remembered only for his single act of violence.

**Roger Crab**, d. 1680, a Buckinghamshire Philadelphian pacifist, was the original Mad Hatter.

**The Revd. J .C. Crawford**, a M.C.C. Committee member, was the sole objector to a 1902 motion calling for the bowling-crease to be increased from 78 to 80 inches. But refused a reason.



**Daniel Dancer**, c. 1863, a Durham miner and elder, given a poached trout as he entered Long Houserow Baptist Chapel, sat upon it and, after a longish sermon followed by a prayer-meeting, to his delight found that he had baked it.

**Mr Dartnell**, c. 1867, a draper and Methodist local-preacher of Broad Green, Surrey, took 10 wickets for 0 runs against Thornton Heath. And there were no extras.

**John Donne**, d. 1631, the poetical son of a Welsh ironmonger, wrecking a civil career by running off with his employer Lord Egerton's niece, repented in jail, took Holy Orders and became Dean of St Paul's. His pre-penitential verses always have been much admired secretly by clergymen's pubescent sons and daughters.

**Mr Dowthwaite**, uncertificated Headmaster of Witherslack (Westmorland) C of E School and not much of a scholar, customarily ordered pupils stuck on a word too hard for both of them, 'Coe it summat and gan on'.

**Joseph Dowgill**, c. 1865, Verger at Eccleshare (Lancs) employing a secret cupboard let into the pulpit pedestal as a fermenting chamber, was only unmasked when a demijohn of elderberry wine exploded whilst the congregation was at prayer.

**Dunstan**, Archbishop of Canterbury and a sought-after harpist at parish fund-raisings, after dragging King Edwy from bed (where he lay between his bride and his mother-in-law) so that he could crown him,

was forewarned by a stupendous thunderclap (which killed his horse) of that voluptuary's death. His faith in Divine Intervention was further bolstered when, during a Synod Vote likely to go against him, the floor collapsed and only he (clinging to a beam) survived.

**An over-excited East Anglian parson**, immediately bowled out King Edward VII, who (with immense difficulty) had been persuaded to play in a charity cricket match.

**The Rector of East Calndon, Surrey**, a smallish man, having married his predecessor's large widow, was so cast down and further diminished by her and his step-children's daily breakfast-time comparison with the late spouse and father, that he went into a decline and died.

**Edmund, King and Saint**, d. 840, was murdered by Danes near Hoxne, Suffolk. His severed head revealed its whereabouts in a thicket by calling 'Here! I'm Here!'

**The Revd. Mr Ellerbeck**, whilst conducting the funeral of the 1st Earl of Lowther, was rudely shoved from the pulpit by the deceased's ghost.

**The Vicar of Eastwood (Warwicks)**, c. 1879, having married, was told by his bride whilst emerging from the porch, that he no longer could use the vicarage as the cricket clubhouse.

**The Revd. Elisha Fawcett**, c. 1817, a Wigan evangelical, devoted his life to teaching the natives of the Admiralty Islands the Laws of God and of cricket. Too poor to purchase a monument to this good man, the sorrowing flock erected his wooden leg upon the grave. In that fertile clime it miraculously took root and, for many years furnished a bountiful harvest of cricket bats.

**Aaron Fawcett**, c. 1725, a Hoff (Westmorland) church-bandsman learned only on his deathbed that he need not have suffered a lifetime abstinence from fried bacon because of the law threatening transportation for Firing a Beacon.

**The Revd. William Fellowes**, c. 1830, an Oxford University chaplain lately jilted by the Dean of Christ Church's elder daughter, went out and, in great darkness of soul, struck a cricket ball a record 176 measured paces.

**George Fox**, d. 1624, a Leicestershire weaver's son, founder of The Society of Friends, suffered more whippings, assaults and imprisonments than those boasted of by St Paul (Corinthians 2, Chap. 11, v.16-37). Nevertheless he unconsciously retained a sense of humour, coining that splendid synonym, 'steeple-houses' and entering Lichfield crying, 'Woe! Woe unto this bloody city!'.

**The Revd. Langton Freeman**, d. 1783, of Whilton, Northamptonshire, directed that his mortal remains, whilst awaiting the Last Trump, should lie upon its feather-bed within a greenhouse hedged by blue palings. As the scene of this remarkable stipulation is not greatly distant from the publisher's office, he will report further if readers support a Second Edition.

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,  
so is the sluggard to them that send him.

**Gilbert of Sempringham (Lincs)**, d. 1189, founder of the only English monastic order, the Gilbertines, had so sickening a visage that pilgrims declined invitations to eat with him.

**Mr Greenup**, Parson at Eskdale, Cumberland, c. 1887, explained the Medieval stone coffin kept at the church porch thus, 'Ah weel, y'see et's a varry gud thing. Et minds 'em o' their latter-ends. And then y'know, et's varra handy for umberellas i' wet weather.'

**Daniel Gumb**, of Linkinhorne, Cornwall, adhering to The Old Faith, reared his large family in a cave and baptised them on a scheduled ancient monument.

**John Graham, D.D.**, c. 1779, invented a £12,000 'Celestial Bed for Superior Beings'. It had crimson silk pillows and sheets, glass pillars, a mattress stuffed with stallion's hair, was fitted with 1500 magnets and breathed oriental perfumes. It could be rented for £100 per night (£2000+ of our money)

**William Hackett**, d. 1591, an Oundle maltster and religious enthusiast, startlingly demonstrated Transubstantiation by biting off and eating Mr Freckingham's (a school-master) nose. Thus encouraged, he

prophesied a Second Coming. Undismayed by the expiry of his announced date, he set himself up as The Holy Ghost and also (despite an earclipping in Yorkshire) as Jesus Christ. In the end this lively fellow was hanged for sticking a bodkin into the Queen's portrait.

**Parson Hagman** of Calthorpe (Leics), d. 1747, owner of 58 dogs, 80 ploughs, 83 wigs, 205 pickaxes, 247 razors and 1020 boots, enforced so strict a moral regime by nightly locking in (separately) his men and maidservants, that when he was set upon and drowned by his dogpack, they were unable to save him.

**Mr Hann**, Choirmaster of Stoke Abbott, Dorset, composed numerous anthems which were considered by the parish not only cheaper but superior to those of Mr Handel.

**Elias Hardisty**, c. 1778, a Rochford, Essex, innkeeper and bellringer, hopeful of rising incorruptible on the Latter Day, and fearful of dismemberment by resurrection-men, had the blacksmith make an iron coffin and (at a time to be mutually agreed) to seal him within it.

**Mr Harris**, c. 1876, a Bootle (Lancs) prophet, known also as Heavenly Father, claiming that a prophetess, Lily Queen, reposed in his bosom, counselled female disciples troubled in spirit to seek nightly refuge with her. And many testified to the comfort so afforded.

**The Curate of Hawridge, Bucks**, c. 1505, was charged before a Bishop's Court for discharging his daily liturgical duties by 8 each morning the better to devote his time to 'playing football in his shirt'.

**The Revd. Doctor Heath**, Headmaster of Eton, angered by the defeat of his school XI by his brother-in-law's Westminster School, flogged not only the team but the umpire and (perhaps unjustly) the scorer.

**Henry VI**, d. 1461, a Royal Saint, was so devout that a hint of bosom-cleavage caused him to cry, 'Fie!' so god-fearing that, even when an infant, he screamed at a suggestion of Sabbath Day travel and so lowly in spirit that, when his fierce wife bore an heir, he modestly ascribed fatherhood to the Holy Ghost.

**Canon Hepplewhite**, Norwich, c. 1902, an angler, customarily kept in the font minnows supplied for bait by choirboys.

**The Revd. Edward Hodge**, Headmaster and Choirmaster of Oakham School, noting some inattention when, during a storm, a large fireball bounded along the Parish Church nave, improved the time by pointing out the extraordinary scientific interest in this phenomenon.

**The Vicar of Holme Cultrum**, Cumberland, c.1636, piqued by his churchwardens' disinclination to sanction purchase of a splendid hood to go with his new university gown, resigned and returned Down South.

**Jimmy Hurst**, c. 1840, an immensely rich Rawcliffe (Yorks) churchwarden, regularly rode with the Badsworth Hunt upon a bull. Upon his death he was borne, encoffined in a sideboard, by six strong widows, once recipients of his bounty.

**Hugh of Lincoln**, Bishop and Saint, d. 1200, and an excessive admirer of holy relics, whilst visiting Fécamp Abbey, chewed off a piece of Mary Magdalén's arm whilst its guardians wailed, 'O! O noh feras!' (O, for shame! For shame!)

**Henry Jenkyns**, d. 1670, bellringer and, latterly a beggar of Ellerton-in-Swaledale, the North Riding, died at the advanced age of 169 whilst recounting how, as a youth, he had delivered a load of arrowheads at Flodden Field (1513).

**Edward Kelley**, a Walton-le-Dale, Lancs, churchyard botanist, c. 1873, whilst trapping night-moths, so startled an unburied corpse that it sat up and began prophesying.

**The Rector of Kencott**, Bucks, c. 1467, supplementing his stipend by grazing calves in the churchyard, caused great offence amongst relatives by removing the top of a parishioner's table-tomb the better to create a drinking trough.

**The Vicar of Kennington**, Kent, c. 1511, having rashly volunteered for a notoriously rough billet, was barred from his church by Richard Richards, a gangster who had ravished every suitable woman in the parish. When, during this monster's annual holiday, he daringly entered the building, none of his terrified flock turned up to help him sing Mass. He thereupon applied for a transfer to a middle class suburban parish near Egham.

**Lumley Kettlewell**, Verger at Bolton Percy, Yorks, c. 1679, had almost perfected a system of staying alive without eating but died without revealing to what stage his research had reached.

**Dr. Elias Kirke**, c. 1772, an Upton Snodsbury sidesman, enjoyed much local esteem for curing skin disorders by stroking the afflicted person with the fingers of a newly available patient's corpse.

**Albert Knight**, a Leicestershire County Cricket Club player and a sidesman, customarily knelt in prayer at the crease before receiving his first ball.

28 Remove not the ancient land-mark,  
which thy fathers have set.

**Peter Labellière**, d. 1800, who never was quite himself after an unrequited love affair with the supremely lovely Hetty Fletcher, forbade his Dorking landlady to burn waste paper upon which God's name was printed. His last testament desired this same person to dance upon the coffin before he was buried head-downwards on Box Hill near Westhumble.

**Annie Lee**, b. 1783, a Salford washerwoman, sad-ironer and Eldress of a sect attributing the Downfall of Man to sex, preached total abstinence from it. Her husband early became a heretic and went off to California with a female backslider.

**John Lydgate**, d. 1451, a Bury St Edmunds monk wrote the language's longest wearisome poem, *The Fall of Princes* (31,564 lines).

**Dorothy Martley**, d. 1660, of Ashbourne, Derbyshire, protested to the Parish Council that if she had stolen two pence from the collection-box then 'Let the Earth swallow me'. And it did.

**Mr Marvell**, (father of the poet), Minister at Winestead, The East Riding, mounted the gunwale of a sinking Humber ferry and, waving his walking-stick and cheerily crying, 'Ho for Heaven!' leapt into the tide.

**The Rector of Mixbury**, Oxon, c. 1512, was reported by the harassed church-wardens to be living in London and his curate living in sin.

**The Revd. Morgan-Jones**, of Blewbury, Berks, c. 1853, boasted that, in 43 years, by topping up at baptisms, weddings, churchings of women and at funerals, he had spent no more than one shilling on drink.

6 Train up a child in the way he should go :  
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

**Lodowick Muggleton**, c. 1698, a Wilbarston (Northamptonshire) tailor, rejecting the Doctrine of the Trinity and Immortality of the Soul, announced that God had abdicated his powers to him, Muggleton, thus rendering prayer in vain. He described God as five feet tall and dwelling in a smallish square room six miles into the sky, and that, when women arrived there they immediately became men. (This last promise converted numerous women). The last Muggletonian, a Sussex man, died in 1790 and the publisher would welcome news of him.

**James Mulgrave**, Rector of Scarborough, c. 1657, so displeased the Mayor of that town by an exposition of the Justification of Sinners, that he joined him in the pulpit and caned him.

**Richard Nayler**, of Ardsley, a typically good-looking and modest Yorkshireman, deserting his family, joined Black Tom Fairfax's Parliamentary army as an infantryman. There, he preached with such effect that his colonel declared himself more terror-stricken than when facing the Scots at Dunbar. Discharged, he became a Quaker and entered Bristol on an ass heralded by young women crying 'Hosanna!' His case was debated in Parliament, he was branded, his tongue bored, his speech made unintelligible. At last, whilst making for his own loved country, he was mugged to death by vile Midland thugs.

**John Nield**, d. 1853, Churchwarden at Long Marston, Bucks, believing that, whilst passing in a carriage, Queen Victoria had smiled at him, left her a fortune of a quarter of a million pounds. Hearing that a poor woman who once had saved his life had been left nothing, the monarch graciously awarded her a pension of £2 a week.

**Joshua Norton**, c. 1800, a City Church sidesman, unreasonably made bankrupt by impatient creditors, removed himself to San Francisco and unilaterally proclaimed himself Emperor of the United States. By checking and reporting unpunctual omnibuses, identifying unclean urinals and the hideouts of defaulting bookies, he so endeared himself to his local subjects that many, preferring his sway to that of a distant President, willingly contributed to his private purse.

**Mr H. Oakes**, an Essex Baptist minister, drowned a convert during baptism but was not found guilty of manslaughter.

**Mr Ousby**, Vicar of Shap, Westmorland, c. 1890, standing for the local council, declared, 'We want nea meare Acts o' Parlyment. It'll nobbut mean anudder army o' pleacemen an' we hev plenty ti paay orready.'

**Thos. Parr**, known also as Old Parr, (1483-1635), the Winnington (Salop) verger, a very hairy man, first married aged 80 and 25 years later, was made to stand (wearing only a penitential sheet) in the church porch for fathering a bastard. Aged 122, he remarried a beautiful Welsh widow, Jane Adda (née Flood). At 153, he made a first visit to London. The Court's rich diet was fatal and, at the inquest, Richard Harvey (discoverer of the circulatory system) testified that he died of urban pollution.

**Parson Pike** of Kirby Malory, (Leics), c. 1803, was so fat that he was winched in and out of his pulpit from an ingenious pulley devised by a local corn-merchant.

**Wm. Pivett**, c. 1790, an 18 year-old York chorister, hearing a sermon by a curate on the text, 'Watch for ye know not the hour' was so alarmed that, for the next forty years, he slept fully clothed in a chair.

**Peter Pontefract**, a hermit, d. 1213, having foretold the death within a twelvemonth of King John, was hung as a false prophet on the 366th day.

Boast not thyself of to morrow;  
for thou knowest not what a day  
may bring forth.

**Richard Porson**, a Norfolk parish-clerk's son, against the odds became a renowned professor at Trinity, Cambridge, where students fought for seats near enough the podium the better to speculate whether or not his frockcoat was held together with cobwebs and to admire his volcanic countenance (only partly ameliorated by a brown paper nose). This learned man's customary weapon of defence was irony but, quickened by a cutting denigration of his Lexicon of Photius, he gravely injured its Cambridge reviewer with a small poker.

**The Fifth Duke of Portland**, d. 1879, a Patron, customarily moved around his Nottinghamshire mansion wearing three overcoats, a two-foot tall hat and carrying an opened umbrella. To alleviate local distress he employed 10,000 people on vast underground works ranging from ballrooms to a Kitchen-Dining Room Railway. A negotiated settlement offered employees donkeys and umbrellas for not staring at him.

**The Revd. Charles Powlett**, Vicar of Itchen Abbas, Hants, c. 1760, son of the Duke of Bolton and the original Polly Peacham (Lavinia Fenton) founded the justly famous Hambledon Cricket Club.

**Dr. Price, Dean of Hereford**, c. 1630, a proud and pontifical man, whilst riding in procession was imprisoned beneath a dustcart stallion which had mounted his mare (being then on heat) and, to the astonishment of the spectators lay flattened, until the gross creature had 'done its business'.

**Henry Purslow**, Churchwarden and patriot of Cockayne Hatley, Beds, c. 1799, incensed by his Vicar's obsessive choking of the church with bulkily ornate Flemish furniture, re-opened a path into the chancel by selling the newly installed monumental pulpit to Carlisle Cathedral.

**Mr Readrem**, c. 1714, an enterprising North Dorset blacksmith, whilst repairing rainwater-goods on his church roof observed a highway robbery. Sliding down a drainpipe, he borrowed a horse to pursue and hang the robber. At his trial he was acquitted by a local jury for lack of witnesses.

**The Revd. Mr Rivette-Carnon**, c. 1875, a High Church curate of Hay, complained of continual attacks by Mrs Eglin's (a Methodist) gander

which, whenever he passed, went for the lace-bottomed cassock which he affected.

**John Robbins**, c. 1655, an Essex farmer, claimed earlier identities as (a) Melchisidek (b) Adam. His plans to invade The Holy Land founded on his recruits inability to stomach the advanced dietary theories upon which he insisted. His faith, weakened by a Sentance of Eternal Damnation by Muggleton (q.v.) was utterly extinguished at a brief interview with Oliver Cromwell.

**Mr de Rougement**, c. 1854, a Putney Methodist exhorter, shipwrecked in New Guinea, set up as a cannibal chief. To cure him of a fever, his senior wife trudged one hundred miles to a saline spring the better to stuff a bull's carcass with herbs, spices and her ailing husband. Quickly recovering, yet finding himself imprisoned in the now rigid intestine, he read aloud from a Bible held before his eyes by a rota of wives whilst, during several days, he was being scraped free. Sobered by this ordeal, he retired to his native land and was last seen selling matches in Sunderland.

**Thos. Savage**, d. 1668, aged 17, a Bible-class scholar, robbed his master, a St Giles-in-the-Field vintner and fled with Blazer, a strumpet, to Gravesend, where he was seized in bed. At the gallows foot, the repentant youth indignantly refused customary grave-clothes as unfitting garb to meet his Maker and addressed his coffin as 'The ship whereon I must launch out into Eternity'. Officially pronounced dead, female admirers cut him down and turn and turn about, kissed him back to life, reviving all but his powers of speech. Thus when the Sheriff chanced to return that way, he was unable to plead for mercy and was re-hung.

**Will Seaford**, c. 1583, a Lewes shepherd turned sheep-stealer, the noose about his neck, claimed Benefit of Clergy, proving this by reading aloud Chapter One of the Book of Genesis and so was released.

**Job Senior**, d. 1901, a Burley Woodhead (West Riding) choirmen, sang bass, contralto, tenor or soprano as necessity or fancy took him.

**Wm. Savage**, Vicar of Braughing, Herts, c. 1509, indignantly rebutted a Consistory Court Order to remove a 'hearthmate' from his dwelling, declaring her to be his sister.

**Aaron Shenley**, a Sarratt (Herts) Methodist farmer and local preacher, successfully wrestled in prayer for six hours at the bedside of Rebecca, Ann and Mary Baldwin, teenagers who till that time had only mewed or barked.

**The Revd. Dr. Siddon**, d. 1900, a High Churchman, by tossing buns, trained his cat, Botolph, to leap upon the bust of the Revd. Mr Busby, an Evangelical.

**Mr A. Skelding**, a Methodist class-leader and professional cricket umpire, at Sheffield in 1932, adjudicated favourably on two successive leg-before-wicket appeals. When Horace Fisher's third ball struck the leg of W.T. Lucke (Somerset) he raised his forefinger and (declare witnesses) in tones of deep solemnity pronounced, 'As God is my witness, that is OUT also.'

**John Skelton**, d. 1529, Poet Laureate and Rector of Diss, Suffolk, was frequently locked from his church whilst his curate scandalously flew his hawks there.

**The Revd. Edwin Slope's cat**, Mary Ann, (d.1927) overhearing a plot to have her 'attended to', scaled a high wall and ran away to sea. A twelvemonth to the day, furnished by a friendly mariner with a log listing her oriental ports of call, she returned to the now repentant Hampstead vicarage.

**John Smale**, Vicar of Tilmanstone, Kent, c. 1499, a temperance campaigner, would thrust his servant into alehouses ('Gow thou yn and geve a blowe') whilst he with a cudgel waited in ambush to flatten fugitives.

**The Revd. Elisha Smith**, Curate at Towcester, Northamptonshire, c. 1773, at the age of 19 renounced loose-living, dancing and cricket ('the last of which he was particularly fond')

**Revd. W. Spooner**, d. 1930, Warden of New College, Oxford, attracted decent attendance at chapel because of a tendency to transpose initial letters whilst announcing hymns - ('Kinquering kongs their titles take' and apocryphally so on).

**The Revd. Thos. Storry**, inducted to Kirk Brampton, Cumberland on May 20th, 1679, during his long incumbency, claimed to have buried everyone alive in the parish on the day of his institution.

**Thos. Sturgess-Jones**, Rector of Garboldisham, Norfolk, c. 1922, silenced criticism that his parish magazine contained too little controversial matter by weekly publishing the village cricket team's batting and bowling averages.

**Arabella Swainson**, wife of a Kew deacon, hearing that her husband was condemned to death by firing squad on the first stroke of curfew, climbed into the steeple and clung to the swinging clapper, thus silencing the bell. Thus she not only saved her dear husband but inspired that immortal poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (an American), 'Curfew must not ring tonight'. Frequently rendered with striking effect at Sunday-school concerts by this publisher's sister.

**John Henry Sykes**, of Preston, c. 1862, an unemployed hermit, was appointed to a hole at Goosenargh (Lancs) furnished only with a pedal organ and a small tin bath and, for three years, gave every satisfaction.

**Thos. Tany (pron. Tawny)**, c. 1650, an Isle of Alderney goldsmith but, by spiritual conviction, a Transylvanian, was a self-appointed Reubenite High Priest and circumcised himself. Additionally claiming himself to be the Earl of Essex and heir to the thrones of Britain and France, he erected twelve tents to the twelve tribes of Eltham. Thence leading a crusade against the Turks, he was lost at sea.

**Martha Taylor**, c. 1793, a flower-arranger of Over Haddon (Derbys) overlooked in her love for the new curate, practised self-immolation on one prune a day.

**William Temple**, whilst Headmaster of Repton publicly defined cricket as 'organised loafing' but this was not considered reason enough to block his preferment as Archbishop of Canterbury.

**The Vicar of Tockhole (Lancs)**, c. 1847, customarily aroused sermon-dozers by bawling, 'Wakken oop! Ye'll ha' time enuff 'doaze i' Hell'.

**Mary Toft**, c. 1666, a Godalming Sunday-school teacher, convinced the Royal Physician and a Parliamentary Commission that she had given birth to four rabbits.

*"How can a bishop marry ? How can he flirt ? The most he can say is 'I will see you 'in the vestry after service'."*

*"Calling on a Unitarian doctor who complained of being in a cold ague, he cried, 'I can cure you. Cover yourself with the Thirty-nine Articles and you will soon be all of a delicate glow'."*

Sydney Smith.

**Matthew Trevalia**, c. 1500, a chorister at Zennor, Cornwall, so charmed a passing mermaid with his light tenor voice that she wooed and won him. During spring tides (when the wind sits right) the S.W.Travel Board claim that he can be heard singing psalms on Sunday evenings during trinity.

**William Tyndal**, d. 1536 by judicial strangulation in Louvain. This indomitable Gloucestershire man translated the New Testament into English (but, by God's grace not the English of the New English Bible) so that his countrymen might read it and thus laid a foundation for the sublime Authorized Version.

**Charles Watertown**, of Walton Hall, Essex, churchwarden, c. 1862, was said to be able to scratch his neck with his big toe and customarily, when entertaining church dignitaries, to dine beneath the table, the while growling and snapping at his guest's ankles.

**Lot Wilkins**, a Sedgeberrow (Worcs) sidesman, c. 1756, forbidden by canon law to marry his Deceased Wife's Sister, arranged with a solicitor to take her on lease.



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*"St. Paul's is certain death. My sentences are frozen as they come out of my mouth and are thawed in the course of summer, making strange noises and unexpected assertions in various parts of the church."*

Sydney Smith

**Lady Fanshawe**, c. 1783, of Gloucester, a Patron and mother of seven, having lain in the family vault for two days, on the third was revived by two terror-stricken resurrection-men employed by a teaching-hospital. She continued alive for several more happy years.

*"He deserves to be preached to death by wild curates."*

*"What is real piety? What is true attachment to the Church? How are fine feelings best evinced? The answer is plain—by sending strawberries to a clergyman."*

Sydney Smith.

*the Seducer and false Prophet.*

**Alexander Cruden, M.A.**, a Calvinist dissenter, d. 1770, between spells chained to an asylum bedstead, compiled references, chapter & verse, to every noun, verb, adjective and adverb in the Holy Bible. This great work, Cruden's Concordance to the Scriptures, inherited from his father, stands by this publisher's bedside, a constant inspiration to the compilation of similarly valuable Works of Reference.